

J.C. Watts, Jr.
Chairman
4th District, Oklahoma

House Meets at 12:00 Noon for Legislative Business

Anticipated Floor Action:
H.R. 4—National Missile Defense Act



H.R.4—National Missile Defense Act

Floor Situation: The House will consider H.R. 4 as its first order of business today. Yesterday, the Rules Committee granted a closed rule that provides two hours of general debate, equally divided between the chairman and ranking member of the Armed Services Committee. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. Finally, the bill provides one motion to recommit, with or without instructions.

Summary: H.R. 4 declares as official U.S. policy a commitment to deploy a national missile defense system. In response to the growing threat presented by the proliferation of ballistic missile technologies to rogue nations, the 105th Congress established a bipartisan commission to investigate this threat, chaired by highly-respected former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and commonly known as the “Rumsfeld Commission.” The bipartisan and unanimous conclusions of the commission, released in July 1998, indicate that the threat posed to the United States by nations seeking to acquire ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction is “broader, more mature, and evolving more rapidly than has been reported in estimates and reports by the intelligence community.” The commission emphasized that the United States might have “little or no warning” before a ballistic missile threat materializes.

North Korea recently attempted to place a satellite into orbit with a newly developed version of its *Taepo Dong-1* ballistic missile. This attempt surprised observers, as the modified missile had capabilities unanticipated by the intelligence community, as well as a third stage which intelligence experts estimate will allow the missile to reach portions of the United States, including Alaska and Hawaii. North Korea is also continuing to develop a ballistic missile with an anticipated range of up to 10,000 kilometers—sufficient to reach much of the continental United States.

The Clinton Administration's current policy commits the United States to the development—but not *deployment*—of a national missile defense system. Such an approach is predicated on the belief that the United States will have sufficient warning time to deploy a missile defense system as ballistic missile threats emerge. Although the administration proposed additional funding to support a national missile defense deployment in its six-year defense plan, it does not intend to make a deployment decision before June 2000.

H.R. 4 was introduced by Mr. Weldon and Mr. Spratt on February 4, 1999. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that enactment will have no budgetary impact. The House Armed Services Committee reported the measure by a vote of 50-3 on February 25, 1999.

Views: The Republican Leadership strongly supports passage of H.R. 4. An official Clinton Administration position was unavailable at press time.

Additional Information: See *Legislative Digest*, Vol. XXVIII, #7, Pt. II, March 16, 1999.



To subscribe to this publication via e-mail, please send an e-mail to LegDigest@mail.house.gov and type "SUBSCRIBE" in the subject line.

Brian Fortune: *Managing Editor*

Kevin Smith: *Senior Legislative Analyst*

Scott Galupo, Brendan Shields:
Legislative Analysts

House
REPUBLICAN
Conference

Legislative
Digest

<http://hillsource.house.gov/LegislativeDigest>
